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Manufacturing opportunities statewide

Jerome Stutts helps make tires. Big tires. Some of the largest tires in the world.

Jerome is a Manufacturing Professional Operator at the earthmover facility at Michelin North America in Lexington, SC, which produces tires for front end loaders.



Earthmover tires manufactured by Michelin.

He is also one of the first to complete the South Carolina Manufacturing Certification (SCMC) program at Midlands Technical College. Through hands-on training in safety, quality practices and measurement, and the manufacturing process in a simulated manufacturing environment, the SCMC program prepares students for jobs in the Midlands' growing manufacturing industry.

"Entry level manufacturing is a middle skill job," says Kim Mann, Business Solutions Director for Corporate and Continuing Education at Midlands Technical College. "We have the jobs, but we don't have the people trained to do them. Even if someone has no experience in manufacturing, this program gives them the skills and knowledge to be successful in the manufacturing field."

The SCMC program is helping businesses throughout the state, including Boeing, Continental, Bridgestone Americas, ConAgra Foods, Ritedose Corporation, Element TV and BMW. Individuals completing the SCMC program are also great job candidates for businesses who hold federal contracts.

Last April, Midlands Technical College was looking for referrals to the SCMC program, which was just beginning in the Midlands. Mann contacted Steve Marshall, SCVRD Business Development Specialist (BDS), asking, "How can we partner together?"

"You have people you want to train and find jobs for and I've got employers," she said. "But I don't have students."

Marshall felt that the program was a great match for Jerome.

"Jerome had been a truck driver for over 20 years. He had to change careers due to limitations resulting from a rollover accident," he recalls. "We were exploring career possibilities, which included manufacturing, and he had an interest in Michelin."

"The two came together at the perfect time," he says. "VR helped prepare Jerome for the program and Jerome excelled during the class."

Randy Crutfield, site hiring manager for Michelin, spoke to the class about opportunities at Michelin. He was immediately impressed with Jerome.

"Jerome is a great example of this manufacturing certification program at work," says Crutfield.

"He came to us with a background in trucking, but there wasn't necessarily



Kim Mann, Business Solutions Director for Corporate and Continuing Education at Midlands Technical College.

anything in his background to indicate he would excel in an industrial environment. The program and training gave him the confidence to better represent himself in an interview, and he was selected to work at our Lexington site."

"Jerome set the bar," says Marshall. "He's doing fantastic in his job."

"Employers are interested in this because you have someone with a silver WorkKeys or better, who has taken this class for 200 hours," says Mann. "They know that individual has made a commitment to this. They know they're getting a good employee."

She adds that students in the program also receive training in Six Sigma Yellow Belt and utilize computer-based simulations. "They learn how to be proactive. Critical thinking skills are very important."

"Not only did Jerome open the door for additional referrals from Voc Rehab," says Marshall, "but he strengthened Midlands Tech's relationship with Michelin."

"VR helps us find the right person for the training," says Kim Mann. "It's not just about putting people into seats. We want people to be successful."

"What we do is individualized," says Marshall. "We give our clients a lot of valuable labor market and career guidance. We work with each client as a team to find the best career opportunity for them. That's exactly what happened with Jerome."

"It's exciting when you work with something like this," says Mann. "You get to see the individual make a good living for themselves and their family."

Since Jerome graduated, two additional classes, which have included more than eight VR clients, have completed the 10 week program.

"Every class so far has had at least one VR client," says Mann, who is thrilled about the partnership with VR. "The class that finished in December was composed entirely of VR clients!"

"As the economy improves and manufacturing expands in South Carolina, this is a great opportunity for anyone wanting to get into a manufacturing career," adds Marshall.

"We're hoping to create a pipeline of 1,200 workers by next year," says Mann.

Allen Johnson came to VR after hearing a presentation made at the Veterans Administration (VA). He had been out of the competitive workforce for 14 years. Prior to that he had worked in construction, worked for SCE&G and was a Marine.

"I had never thought about going into the manufacturing production field," he says. But after discussing the possibility with his VR counselor and the job readiness team, he's excited.

"My goal is to find employment in the Blythewood or Ridgeway area," he says. Both are areas where manufacturing is expanding.

"I'm excited about the challenge of going to school again. This [manufacturing] is something I haven't done before. It will be a unique experience."

The SCMC program is currently available at technical colleges around the state, including Midlands Technical College in Columbia, Trident Technical College in Charleston, Piedmont Technical College in Greenwood, Aiken, Central Carolina in Sumter, Greenville, Horry-Georgetown, and Northeastern Technical College in Cheraw. Scholarships are available.

Find out more at www.sctechsystem.edu/scmc.

Gov. Haley attends Health Day and Career Fair



Florence Area staff participated in the Dillon County Health Day and Career Fair recently. Governor Nikki Haley spoke at the event and stopped by the SCVRD exhibit to thank staff for their work in helping people with disabilities become successfully employed.

Pictured (l to r): Tabitha Hennagan, counselor; Tameka B. Williams, counselor; Governor Haley; Carol Anderson, area supervisor; Teresa Moses, area client services manager.

Rewined Candles wins Palmetto Workforce Partnership Award

Rewined Candles, located in Charleston, SC, was honored with the Palmetto Workforce Partnership Award in the small business category. The award was presented to Rewined at the South Carolina Workforce Investment Board Partnership Symposium held at the Columbia Marriott on March 20, 2014.

The winner was selected based on 5 categories: job creation, innovative workforce partnerships, support for human growth and development in the workplace and community, quality of the work environment, compliance, company's value and culture, and environmental awareness.



Pictured (l to r): Cathy Clower, SCVRD Business Development Specialist; Hannah Bise, HR Manager, Rewined; Adam Fetsch, Owner, Rewined.

High school students prepare for the future

Twenty-one high school students from the Anderson and Oconee-Pickens offices toured Greenville Technical College on Friday April 18, 2014.

Students discovered a variety of different career choices and opportunities as they explored the nursing, construction, HVAC, and cosmetology departments.

The hands-on approach to learning at Greenville Technical College was very exciting and appealing to them.

They also learned about Student Disability Services and the Quick Jobs program.

One of the tour guides, a student ambassador at Greenville Technical College, was a former Vocational Rehabilitation client.



Transition Information Fair a success in Gaffney



Fifty-one students from Blacksburg, Gaffney, and Union County high schools participated in a Transition Information Fair at the Gaffney office on March 21.

Students learned valuable information about transitioning to higher education or work after high school and discovered many of the services which are available to help them succeed.

The Limestone College Director of Program for Alternative Learning Styles (PALS), a Navy recruiter, a Spartanburg Community College STEM careers representative, Able South Carolina, and a VR Benefits Specialist spoke to the students.

High School/High Tech students tackle ropes

course



A group of High School/High Tech students enjoy the ropes course at Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School. Earlier in the year HS/HT counselors came for the ropes course experience so they can better inform parents how this helps with team building, leadership, communication, and confidence.

Lexington job fair



The Lexington Area Office held a very successful Job Fair on March 20. Successful results include 17 clients interviewed for jobs, one client received a job offer, one client was hired, and three clients entered into on-the-job training opportunities.

Participating businesses included Blue Cross Blue Shield, Lexington County Sheriff's Department, T&B Towing, Babcock, Adam's Thrift Store, Columbia Farms, Bullock Heating and Air, and McEntire Produce.

Orientation at Palmetto Center



Palmetto Center held an orientation for agents with the SC Department of Probation, Parole and Pardon Services (SCDPPPS) from Florence and Marion counties on April 28. Attendees learned about the variety of addictions treatment services available for eligible clients referred by the SCDPPPS.

Pictured front row (l to r): Carol Anderson, Florence Area Supervisor; Levette Segars, VR counselor; Jennifer Brice, SCDPPPS agent; Alan Collins, SCDPPPS Agent in Charge for Florence and Marion counties. Back row (l to r): Mitchell Rouse, VR counselor; Kenneth Feagins, VR Counselor; Luke Gainey, SCDPPPS Agent; Tyra White, SCDPPPS Agent, Marsha Tunstall, Addictions Counselor, Palmetto Center.

Did you know...

...that SCVRD's Work Training Centers are a valuable outsource resource to over 400 small and large businesses statewide?

Each year businesses ranging from worldwide corporations to small local business operations save thousands of dollars by utilizing VR's network of 24 work training centers conveniently located around the state.

While VR training centers are a valuable resource to many businesses, more importantly they offer a variety of training to VR clients. With many thanks to our business partners, last year more than 4,700 clients learned invaluable skills that prepared them for employment.

Events

Lexington

- May 14, 7:30-10 am - **Graduation Bonanza.** A graduation celebration for seniors and parents. Information packets for college track and employment track students will be provided and a representative from Job Corps will speak.
For more information, call 803-782-4239 or 866-206-5280

Richland

- May 15, 7:30-10 am - **Open House.**
For more information, call 803-782-4239 or 866-206-5280

Columbia

- May 16, 12 pm - **South Carolina Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities Awards Luncheon.** Earlewood Community Building, Earlewood Park Columbia, South Carolina
For more information, call 803-896-6503

Laurens

- May 29, 7:30-9 am - **Business Services Forum**. Piedmont Technical College, SCVRD, and the SC Manufacturing Extension Partnership will deliver information about the many services available to businesses. The Center for Advanced Manufacturing, Innovation Drive, Laurens, SC
For more information, call 864-984-6563 or 866-443-0103

The Bryant Center

The Bryant Center is accepting referrals for its two-week **Summer Program for Transition Students**. Students attending one of the scheduled sessions will participate in physical therapy or exercise; take part in simulated work experiences and learn independent living skills through occupational therapy; enhance leadership, teamwork and communication skills; explore careers and post-secondary interests; and engage in mock interviews and other job preparedness activities.

- June 2-13 - Session 1: **Summer Transition Program**.
- July 7-18 - Session 2: **Summer Transition Program**.
- July 28-August 8 - Session 3: **Summer Transition Program**.

All sessions meet 9 am-12 pm Monday, Wednesday and Friday. To refer a student, please fax a SCVR 219, SCVR 318, SCVR 318a (signed by the student and parent) and a Comprehensive Center referral form to Jennie Thomas at 864-949-6775.

For more information, call 864-249-8030 or 888-322-9391

Comprehensive Evaluation Center (CEC)

The CEC **Summer Transition Evaluation Program for Students (STEPS)** is offering three two-week sessions this summer. Referrals are being accepted. Students will participate in physical therapy/exercise, occupational therapy, nutrition counseling, career exploration, and work readiness activities.

- June 9-20 - Session 1: **STEPS**.
- June 23-July 3 - Session 2: **STEPS**.
- July 7-18 - Session 3: **STEPS**.

For more information, contact Gloria Plotnik 803-896-6040

Enabling eligible South Carolinians with disabilities to prepare for, achieve and maintain competitive employment

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